TUG is \TeX \text{ users helping each other}
Jonathan Fine

1 What is a user group?
If you are reading this, then you are most likely a \TeX \text{ user, and a member of the } \TeX \text{ Users Group. The essence of TUG is } \TeX \text{ users helping each other. For this to happen, we must ask for and offer help to each other. } TUGboat \text{ articles mostly offer useful information. Online forums allow questions to be asked and answered, sometimes in close to real time.}

2 The rise and fall of TUG
TUG was founded around 1982. Membership grew rapidly until about 1992. Since then it has declined, with a clear temporary reversal between 1998 and 2003, and a few minor ups and downs. TUG membership is now at its lowest point since about 1985, about 1/3 its peak.

3 TUG’s finances
All figures are in thousands, rounded. In 2016 TUG’s income was $104. Running the office cost $75, and producing \text{TUGboat} $25. Legal fees were $14. There were other expenses. At year’s end, there was a loss of $21, reducing TUG’s assets to $195.

4 Communication is the essence
The essence of TUG is helpful communication between \TeX \text{ users. Here, of course, Board members have a special responsibility. I ask the Board to do more to encourage and participate in helpful member-to-member communication.}

5 The TUG members mailing list
There’s already a mailing list for this: \url{http://tug.org/mailman/listinfo/members}. Sadly, it’s close to dead. In 2017 there were just 2 threads, and 3 solitary messages. Earlier years are similar.

6 You and the revival of TUG
Without helpful open communication between members, TUG will continue to decline. And with helpful open communication, we’ll make the best of what there is. Please, if you’re a TUG member, email postmaster@tug.org and ask to be placed on the TUG members list. And then a future will be possible.

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